Understanding Social Science

Chapter 1 · Foundations

Reading Guide · Glossary · Comprehension · Practice Questions · 10 Puzzles

NCERT Companion Workbook · Based on "Understanding Society: India and Beyond -- Grade 9, Part 1 (NCERT, 2026)"

Name: _____

Class & Section: _____

School: _____

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Chapter Overview

This opening chapter asks what 'Social Science' actually means. It argues that no single subject can explain how people live together, so the discipline is really a family of four core fields in Grades 9-10 -- Geography, History, Political Science and Economics -- each asking a different question about the same shared world. It also traces how observation, evidence and reasoning have deep roots in India's own intellectual traditions, long before 'Social Science' existed as a school subject.

Reading & Study Guide

Section	What to Focus On
Social Science in Everyday Life	Notice how ordinary daily objects and routines depend on invisible systems.
Understanding through Time and Traditions	Look for how old Indian ideas about nature and society still echo today.
Social Science as a Study of Disciplines	Work out why a single event needs more than one discipline to explain it.
Geography / History / Political Science / Economics	Compare what question each discipline asks about the same society.
Why Should We Study Social Science?	Connect the four disciplines to your own role as a citizen.

Key Terms Glossary

Term	What It Means
GEOGRAPHY	Studies Earth, environments and human surroundings
HISTORY	Study of the human past and its sources
ECONOMICS	Studies production, distribution and use of resources
POLITICS	Studies governance, power and citizens rights
SOCIOLOGY	Discipline exploring human social relationships
ANTHROPOLOGY	Broader field studying human societies and cultures
PSYCHOLOGY	Field studying human behaviour and the mind
EMPIRICAL	Evidence gathered through observation or experiment
NUMISMATIC	Historical source type: coins, currency or medals
EPIGRAPHIC	Historical source type: inscriptions on stone or metal
GENEALOGICAL	Records tracing family lineage across generations

ARTHASHASTRA	Ancient treatise on statecraft attributed to Kautilya
PANCHAYAT	Village-level grassroots self-government institution
BHUVAN	NCERT web portal used to map your own locality
ITIHASA	Bharatiya storytelling tradition preserving cultural memory
RADIOCARBON	Dating method based on radioactive decay of carbon
ARCHAEOLOGY	Study of the past through excavated material remains
DHARMA	Sanskrit concept of duty and moral responsibility
SURVEY	Systematic method of collecting information from people
INTERVIEW	Method researchers use to learn directly from people
MONUMENT	A structure that is a type of archaeological source
TRAVELOGUE	A written account describing a journey
OBSERVATION	Careful watching, a key skill of social scientists

Comprehension Questions

Q1. Why does the chapter say Social Science is 'a group of related disciplines' rather than one subject?

Q2. How does Geography connect the physical world to human life?

Q3. What makes the Panchayati Raj system an example of political ideas from the past shaping the present?

Q4. Give one reason why studying Economics helps a citizen beyond just understanding money.

Q5. What is the difference between the itihasa-purana tradition and modern historiography as ways of understanding the past?

Q6. Why does the chapter insist that Social Science is 'not about memorising dates, maps or definitions'?

Short-Answer Practice (Worked Examples)

Q1. A city is hit by unusually heavy rainfall and floods badly. Which disciplines would a social scientist use to study this, and why?

Q2. Two neighbouring villages have very different occupations -- one mainly farms, the other mainly trades. Explain this using ideas from the chapter.

Q3. A historian finds an inscribed copper plate from 500 CE. What type of source is this, and what might it reveal?

Q4. Why might two historians reach different conclusions from the same ancient text?

Objective Practice

A. Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct option.

1. Which of these is NOT one of the four core Social Science disciplines studied in Grades 9-10?

a) Geography

b) History

c) Biology

d) Economics

2. The Arthashastra is a foundational ancient Indian text mainly about:

a) Music and dance

b) Statecraft and administration

c) Astronomy

d) Weaving techniques

3. A coin issued by an ancient king is an example of a:

a) Literary source

b) Numismatic source

c) Genealogical record

d) Epigraphic source

4. Which discipline focuses most on 'where things are located and why'?

a) History

b) Geography

c) Economics

d) Political Science

5. The Panchayati Raj system is best described as an example of:

a) Foreign trade policy

b) Grassroots democracy

c) A natural landform

d) A type of climate

6. Which of the following is a natural science, NOT part of Social Science?

a) Sociology

b) Physics

c) Political Science

d) Economics

7. Radiocarbon dating and archaeology are tools mainly used by which discipline?

a) Economics

b) History

c) Political Science

d) Geography

8. The concept of 'the world is one family' expressing interconnectedness of societies is:

a) Rajadharma

b) Vasudhaiva kutumbakam

c) Ahimsa

d) Panchamahabhuta

9. Economics primarily studies:

a) The movement of tectonic plates

b) Production, distribution and use of resources

c) Elections and voting

d) Ancient scripts

10. A social scientist studying a drought would need inputs from:

a) Only Geography

b) Only Economics

c) Multiple disciplines together

d) No discipline, only guesswork

B. True or False

1. Social Science is a single, unified subject with no sub-disciplines.
2. Geography uses tools such as maps, GIS and atlases to investigate questions.
3. The Arthashastra is attributed to Kautilya.
4. History relies only on written documents and ignores archaeological evidence.
5. Vedic-era Indian thinkers valued observation, questioning and logical reasoning.
6. Epigraphic sources are inscriptions found on coins.
7. Political Science studies only formal government institutions and nothing else.
8. Understanding diversity through Social Science can build respect and cooperation among communities.

C. Match the Following

Column A	Column B
1. Geography	a) Coins and currency used as evidence
2. History	b) Studies the human past through evidence
3. Numismatic source	c) Grassroots local self-government in India
4. Epigraphic source	d) Studies the Earth and human-environment relationships
5. Arthashastra	e) Inscriptions on stone or metal
6. Panchayati Raj	f) Ancient treatise on statecraft

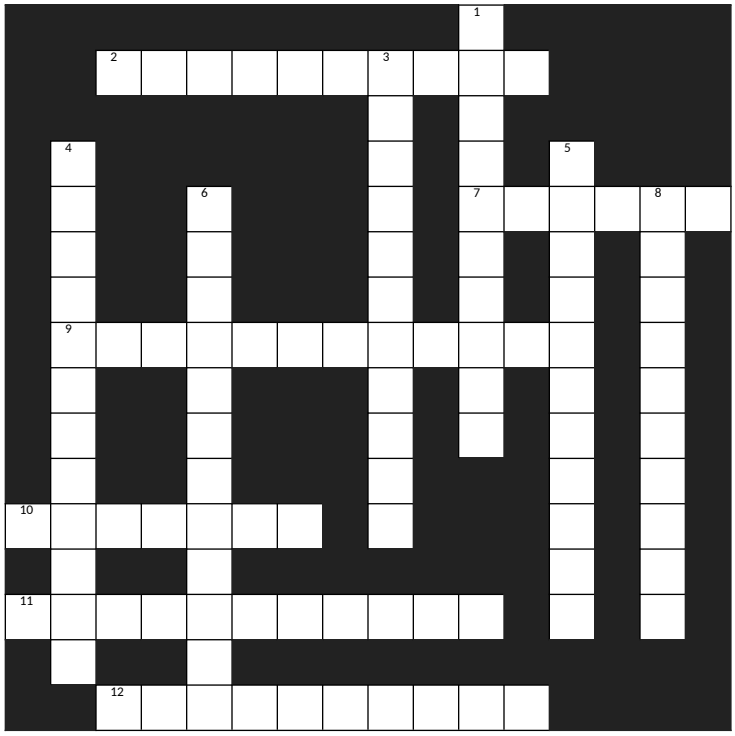
Higher-Order Thinking (HOTS) Questions

Q1. "Social Science is not about memorising facts but about understanding connections." Using one real-life example from your own locality, show how at least two disciplines together explain it.

Q2. India's ancient thinkers discussed governance, economy and nature long before 'Social Science' existed as a school subject. Does this continuity matter for how we study these subjects today? Explain your view.

Puzzle Pack -- 10 Puzzles for This Chapter

1. Crossword



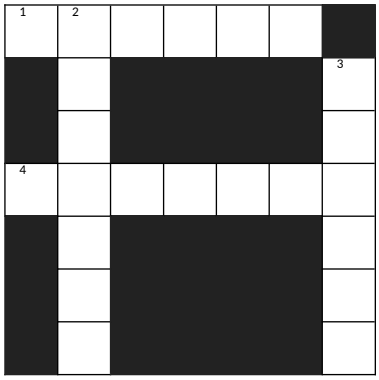
ACROSS

2. A written account describing a journey
7. Systematic method of collecting information from people
9. Ancient treatise on statecraft attributed to Kautilya
10. Study of the human past and its sources
11. Dating method based on radioactive decay of carbon
12. Field studying human behaviour and the mind

DOWN

1. Historical source type: coins, currency or medals
3. Careful watching, a key skill of social scientists
4. Records tracing family lineage across generations
5. Study of the past through excavated material remains
6. Broader field studying human societies and cultures
8. Historical source type: inscriptions on stone or metal

2. Mini Crossword



ACROSS

1. NCERT web portal used to map your own locality
4. Bharatiya storytelling tradition preserving cultural memory

DOWN

2. Study of the human past and its sources
3. Sanskrit concept of duty and moral responsibility

3. Word Search

A	R	T	H	A	S	H	A	S	T	R	A	G	I	B
S	V	V	G	B	C	T	R	D	F	N	U	E	E	G
P	F	B	E	F	S	E	C	S	Y	U	I	O	M	C
A	L	Z	N	U	C	U	H	O	G	M	P	G	O	I
N	A	W	E	T	I	G	A	C	O	I	S	R	B	H
C	C	E	A	N	M	O	E	I	L	S	Y	A	S	P
H	I	I	L	E	O	L	O	O	O	M	C	P	E	A
A	R	V	O	M	N	E	L	L	P	A	H	H	R	R
Y	I	R	G	U	O	V	O	O	O	T	O	Y	V	G
A	P	E	I	N	C	A	G	G	R	I	L	D	A	I
T	M	T	C	O	E	R	Y	Y	H	C	O	E	T	P
Z	E	N	A	M	Q	T	K	Y	T	F	G	V	I	E
Z	N	I	L	A	I	L	G	L	N	F	Y	H	O	J
P	O	L	I	T	I	C	S	U	A	Z	G	H	N	S
A	X	R	A	D	I	O	C	A	R	B	O	N	D	S

Find: ANTHROPOLOGY · ARCHAEOLOGY · ARTHASHASTRA · ECONOMICS · EMPIRICAL · EPIGRAPHIC · GENEALOGICAL · GEOGRAPHY · INTERVIEW · MONUMENT · NUMISMATIC · OBSERVATION · PANCHAYAT · POLITICS · PSYCHOLOGY · RADIOCARBON · SOCIOLOGY · TRAVELOGUE

4. Cryptogram

Each letter was replaced by another. Crack the code.

AKNXZU ANXQBNQ AWGLXQA SKY JQKJUQ, JUZNQA ZBL JKYQP NKBBQNW.

5. Caesar Coded Message

Every letter is shifted by the same amount. Find the shift.

MFVWJKLSFVAFY KGUASD KUAWFUW. KGUASD KUAWFUW KLMVAWK ZGO HWGHDW, HDSUWK SFV HGOWJ UGFFWUL.

6. Word Scramble

Unscramble each set of letters using the clue.

1. NAVBUH -- NCERT web portal used to map your own locality
2. YORTIHS -- Study of the human past and its sources

3. LEIGACELANGO -- Records tracing family lineage across generations

4. HEGYRAPOG -- Studies Earth, environments and human surroundings

5. EOOIMNSCC -- Studies production, distribution and use of resources

6. AEGHLOYOCRA -- Study of the past through excavated material remains

7. RRCAODNOABI -- Dating method based on radioactive decay of carbon

8. IOTIPLSC -- Studies governance, power and citizens rights

9. IMMATCNISU -- Historical source type: coins, currency or medals

10. RDAMAH -- Sanskrit concept of duty and moral responsibility

7. Acrostic

The highlighted letters spell a theme.

S _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Discipline exploring human social relationships

O _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Careful watching, a key skill of social scientists

C _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Studies production, distribution and use of resources

I _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Bharatiya storytelling tradition preserving cultural memory

E _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Evidence gathered through observation or experiment

T _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ A written account describing a journey

Y _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Studies Earth, environments and human surroundings

8. Match the Pairs

Match Column A with Column B.

Column A	Column B
A. BHUVAN	1. Village-level grassroots self-government institution
B. EPIGRAPHIC	2. NCERT web portal used to map your own locality
C. RADIOCARBON	3. Historical source type: inscriptions on stone or metal
D. PSYCHOLOGY	4. Study of the past through excavated material remains
E. INTERVIEW	5. Method researchers use to learn directly from people
F. PANCHAYAT	6. Sanskrit concept of duty and moral responsibility
G. DHARMA	7. Field studying human behaviour and the mind
H. ARCHAEOLOGY	8. Dating method based on radioactive decay of carbon

9. Fill in the Blanks

Fill each blank.

1. Village-level self-government in India is exercised through the _____ system.
2. _____ evidence is information gathered through direct observation or experiment.
3. A written account describing a journey is called a _____.
4. Historians use _____ dating to date ancient organic remains.
5. _____ is the discipline that studies Earth, environments and where things are located.
6. Coins studied by historians to understand the past are called _____ sources.
7. Kautilya's _____ is an ancient treatise on statecraft and administration.

10. Odd One Out

Circle the item that does not belong.

1. Geography Cricket Economics History
2. Culinary Numismatic Epigraphic Genealogical
3. Arthashastra Vedas Puranas Telephone
4. Observation Guessing Survey Interview